

Autobiography — Letters
Written by Lincoln

DRAWER 3 BIOGRAPHY

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Biographies and Stories of Abraham Lincoln

Autobiography – Letters Written by Lincoln

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

LINCOLN LETTERS

Washington, April 2, 1848

Mr David Lincoln

Dear Sir: Last evening I was much gratified by receiving and reading your letter of the 30th of March. There is no longer any doubt that your Uncle Abraham and my grandfather was the same man. His family did reside in Washington County, Kentucky, just as you say you found them in 1801 or 1802. The oldest son Uncle Mordecai . near twenty years ago moved from Kentucky to Hancock County , Illinois, where a year or two afterward he died and where his surviving children now live. His two sons there now are Abraham and Mordecai and their post-office is "La Harpe". Uncle Josiah father back than my recollection, went from Kentucky to Blue River Indiana. I have not heard from him in a great many years and whether he is now living I cannot say. My recollection of what I have heard is that he has several daughters and only one son, Thomas - Their postoffice is Corydon, Harrison County Indiana, Indiana." My father, Thomas, is still living in Coles County, Illinois, being in the seventy first year of his age - his post-office is Charlestown, Coles County, Illinois. - I am his only child. I am now in my fortiety year; and I live in Springfield, Sangamon County, Illinois. This is the outline of my grandfathers family in the West.

Very Truly yours
A. Lincoln

Springfield, Illinois, April 1, 1854

Mr. Jesse Lincoln,

My dear Sir : On yesterday I had the pleasure of receiving your letter of the 16th. of March..... As you have supposed, I ma the grandson of your Uncle Abraham; and the story of his death by the Indians, and of Uncle Mordecai, then fourteen years old , killing one of the Indians , is the legend more strongly than all others imprinted upon my mind and memory. I am the son of grandfathers youngest son Thomas. I have often heard ~~my father~~ my father speak of his Uncle Isaac residing at Watauga (I think) near where the then states of Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee join, - you seem now to be some hundred miles or so west of that. I often saw Uncle Mordecai, and Uncle Josiah but once in my life; but I never resided near either of them.

Very truly your relative

A. Lincoln

Letter to Solomon Lincoln, Historian
Hingham, Mass

Washington, March 24th. 1848.

....."It is my father's understanding that Abraham, Mordecai and Thomas are old family names of ours, my grandfather had as I think I have heard four brothers: Isaac, Jacob, Thomas and John. He had three sons Mordecai, Josiah, and Thomas, the last my father. My Uncle Mordecai had three sons Abraham, James and Mordecai. This is all I know certainly on the subject of names.

Abraham Lincoln
New England Magazine Feb. 1809.

LINCOLN LETTERS

Extract from "Picket and His Men"

To George E. Pickett

I have just told the folks here at Springfield on this 111th anniversary of the birth of him whose name, mightiest in the name of civil liberty, still mightiest in the cause of moral reformation, we mention on solemn awe, in naked, deathless splendor, that the one victory that we can ever call complete will be ~~that~~ that one which proclaims that there is not one slave or one drunkard on the face of God's green earth. Recruit for this victory.

✓ Autobiographical memorandum given to the artist Thomas Hicks

I was born February 12, 1809 in then Hardin County, Kentucky, at a point within the now county of La Rae, a mile, or a mile and a half from where Hodgen's mill now is. My parents being dead, and my own memory not serving, I know no means of identifying the precise locality. It was on Nolin Creek.

A. Lincoln

June 14, 1860

Addition to the Scripp Autobiography

"He settled in an unbroken forest, and the clearing away of surplus wood was the great task ahead. Abraham, though very young, was large of his age, and had an ax put into his hands at once, and from that until his twenty third year, he was most constantly handling that most useful instrument.

- less of course in plowing and harvesting seasons. At this place Abraham took an early start as a hunter, which was never much improved afterwards. A few days before the completion of his eighth year, in the absence of his father, a flock of wild turkeys approached the new log cabin, and Abraham with a rifle gun, standing inside, shot through a crack and killed one of them. He has never since pulled a trigger on any larger game. In the autumn of 1818 his mother died and a year afterwards his father married Mrs Sally Johnston, at Elizabethtown, Kentucky, a widow with three children of her first marriage. She proved a good and kind mother to Abraham, and is still living in Coles County Illinois. There were no children of this second marriage. His father's residence continued in the same place in Indiana till 1830. -----While here

Springfield, Ill. April 6, 1860

Richard V.B. Lincoln Esq.

My dear Sir:-

Owing to absence from home, yours of March 19th. was not received until yesterday. You are a little mistaken. My grandfather did not go from Berks County, Pa. but as I learn his ancestors did sometime before his birth. He was born in Rockingham County Va. went from there to Kentucky, and there was killed by the Indians about 1784. That the family originally came from Berks I learned a dozen years ago, by letter, from one of them residing at Sparta, Rockingham County, Va. This man was David Lincoln. I remember a long time ago seeing Austin Lincoln and Davis Lincoln said to be sons of Hannaniel, or Hannanial Lincoln who was said to have been a cousin of my grand father. I have no doubt that you and I are distantly related. I should think from what you say that you and my father ~~were~~ second cousins.

I shall be glad to hear from you at any time.

Yours very truly,

A. Lincoln

Property of Mr. John W. Lincoln of -
Mifflensburg, Pa.

LINCOLN LETTERS TO SAMUEL HAYCRAFT

(In 1860 Mr Haycraft wrote to Lincoln to know if his mother was Tom Lincolns second wife, and this is the answer which Mr Haycraft received)

Springfield, Ill May 28, 1860

Hon. Sam Haycraft:

Dear Sir : Your recent letter without date is received. Also the copy of your speech on the contemplated Daniel Boone Monument, which I have not yet had time to read. In the maine you are right about my history. My father was Thomas Lincoln and Mrs Sallie Johnson was jhis second wife. You are mistaken about my mother - her maiden name was Nancy Hanks - I was not born in Elizabethtown but my mothers first child, a daughter, two years older than myself, and now long since deceased was, - I was born Feb 12, 1809 near where Hodgenville now is then in Hardin County. I do not think I ever saw you, though I very well know who you are, so well that I recognized your habdwriting on opening your letter. before I saw your sigiature. My recollection is that Ben Helm was first Clerk, that you succeeded him, that Jack Thomas and William Farleigh graduated in the same office, and that you hand-writing were all very similar. Am I right?

My father has been dead near ten years, but my step mother (Mrs Johnston) is still living I am really very glad of your letter and shall be pleased to receive another at any time. Yours very truly

A. Lincoln

(On May 31, 1860, Mr Haycraft wrote to Mr Lincoln the Republican nominee for president inviting him to make a visit to Kentucky, Mr Lincolns native State. He received the following letter in reply.)

Springfield Ill., June 4, 1860- Hon Samuel Haycraft- Dear Sir; Your second letter dated May 31 is received. You suggest that a visit to the place of my nativity might be pleasant to me. Indeed it would. But would it be safe? Would the people lynch me? The place on Knob Creek mentioned by Mr Read I remember very well but I was not born there. As my parents have told me I was born on Nolyn, very much nearer Hodgens mill than the Knob Creek Place is. My earliest recollection, however, is of the Knob Creek place. Like yourself I belonged to the Whig party from its origin to its close. I never belonged to the American Party organization, nor ever to a party called a Union, though I hope I have neither amoe have been less devoted to the Union than yourself or any other patriotic man. It may not be altogether without interest to let you know, that my wife is the daughter of the late Robert Todd of Lexington Ky. and that a half sisters of hers is a wife of Ben Hardin Helm, born and raised at your town, but residing now at Louisville now, as I believe. Yours very Truly,

A. Lincoln

(Copied from Elizabethtown News Feb. 21, 1911)

(Mr. Sallie H. Norton of Owensboro, granddaughter of Saml Haycraft owns.)

LINCOLN LETTERS

Springfield, Ill. June 4, 1860.

Hon. George Ashmun.

My dear Sir: It seems as if the question whether my first name is "Abraham" or "Abram" will never be settled. It is "Abraham"; and if the letter of acceptance is not yet in print, you may, if you think fit, have my signature thereto printed "Abraham Lincoln." Exercise your judgement about this.

Yours as ever,
A. Lincoln.

Note - The "Letter of acceptance" in question was the acceptance of the nomination for President in 1860.

Washington, D.C. Nov. 10 1864

Governor Bramlett, Frankfort, Kentucky:

Yours of yesterday received. I can scarcely believe that Gen. John B. Houston has been arrested "for no other offense than opposition to my reelection"; for, if that had been deemed sufficient cause of arrest, I should have heard of more than one arrest in Kentucky on election day. If, however, Gen. Houston has been arrested for no other cause than opposition to my reelection, Gen. Burbridge will dismiss him at once, I am sending him a copy of this as an order to that effect.

A. Lincoln

Executive Mansion,
Washington, April, 4, 1864

A. G. Hodges, Esq., Frankfort, Kentucky,

My dear Sir: You ask me to put in writing the substance of what I verbally said the other day in your presence, to Governor Bramlette and Senator Dixon. It was as follows:
"I am naturally antislavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I cannot remember when I did not so think and feel, and yet I have never understood that the Presidency conferred upon me an unrestricted right to act officially upon this judgement and feeling. It was in the oath I took that I would, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. I could not take the office without taking the oath. Nor was it in my view to take an oath to get power, and break the oath in using the power. I understand, too, that in ordinary civil administration this oath even forbade me to practically indulge my primary abstract judgement on the moral question of slavery.
.....

Yours truly,
A. Lincoln

LINCOLN LETTERS

Washington, D.C., August 24, 1861

To His Excellency B. Magoffin
Governor of the State of Kentucky.

Sir: Your letter of the 19th instant in which you "urge the removal from the limits of Kentucky of the military force now organized and within camp in said State", is received.

I may not possess full and precisely accurate knowledge upon this subject but I believe it is true that there is a military force in camp within Kentucky acting by authority of the United States, which force is not very large, and is not now being augmented.

I also believe that some arms have been furnished to this force by the United States.

I also believe that this force consists exclusively of Kentuckians, having their camps in the immediate vicinity of their own homes, and not assailing or menacing any of the good people of Kentucky.

Taking all the means within my reach to form a judgement I do not believe it is the popular wish of Kentucky that this force shall be removed beyond her limits, and, with this impression, I must respectfully decline to so remove it.

I most cordially sympathize with your Excellency in the wish to preserve the peace of my own native State, Kentucky; but it is with regret that I search for and cannot find, in your not very short letter any declaration of intimation that you entertain any desire for the preservation of the Federal Union.

Your obedient servant
Abraham Lincoln

Executive Mansion
Washington, September 22, 1861

Hon. H. O. Browning.

My dear Sir: Yours of the 17th is just received; and coming from you I confess it astonishes me. That you should object to a law which you had assisted in making and presented to me less than a month before is odd enough. But this is a very small part. General Fremont's proclamation as to confiscation of property and the liberation of slaves is purely political and not within the range of military law or necessity.

The Kentucky legislature would not budge till that proclamation was modified; and General Anderson telegraphed me that on the news of General Fremont having issued deeds of manumission, a whole company of our volunteers threw down their arms and disbanded. I was so assured as to think it probable that the very arms we had furnished Kentucky would be turned against us. I think that to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game. Kentucky gone we cannot hold Missouri, nor, as I think Maryland. These all against us and the job on our hands is to bagge for us.

Your friend as ever
A. Lincoln

Lincoln Family Record
Written by Abraham Lincoln in his Father's Bible

(Sarah Lincoln, daughter of Thomas &)*
Nancy Lincoln, was born Feb. 12th. 1807-

Abraham Lincoln, Son of Thos. &
Nancy Lincoln was born Feb. 12th. 1809-

Sarah Bush, first married to
Daniel Johnston, and afterwards
second wife of Thos. Lincoln,

was born Dec. 13th. 1788-

John D. Johnston, Son of Daniel &
Sarah Johnston, was born May

1815 Married to Mary Bar....

October 13th. 1834- withs was
born July 22nd. 1816-

Thomas L.D. Johnston, son of John
& Mary Johnston, was born
January 10th. 1837-

Abraham L.D. Johnston, Son of same
parents, was born March 27th. 1838-

Marietta Sarah Jane Johnston, daughter
of same parents, was born January 31,
1840-

Squire H. Johnston, son of same parents
was born, December 15th. 1841-

Richard M. Johnston, son of same parents
was born, October 31th. 1843-

Dennis F. Johnston, son of same parents
was born, November 18th. 1845-

Daniel W. Johnston, son of same parents
was born, December 13th. 1847-

Nancy Jane Williams, was born March
18 1836-

Thomas Lincoln married to Sarah
Johnston Dec. 3rd. 1818-

Sarah Lincoln, daughter of Thos.
Lincoln, was married to
Aug...18..8

Abraham Lincoln, son of Thos.
Lincoln was married to Mary
Todd, Nov. 4th. 1842-

John D. Johnston, was married to his
second wife, Nancy Jane Williams
March 5th. 1851

John D. Johnston son of John D.
and Nancy Jane Johnston was
born April the 11th. 1854-

Nancy Lincoln, wife of Thos. Lin-
coln, died October 5th. 1818

Sarah, daughter of Thos. Lincoln
wife of Aaron Grisby, died
January 20th. 1832-

Thomas Lincoln died January 17....
aged 73 years & 11 days.

*This line is put in by the editor as the
probable information. The line in the original
is missing.

